

**Statement for the Record before the  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
on  
Changes to The Heights Act: Shaping Washington, D.C. for the Future, Part  
II**

December 2, 10:00 am  
Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2154

Chairman Issa:

I am William Brown, the President of the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia, the District's oldest civic organization. Dedicated since 1865 to preserving and promoting the District's history and civic accomplishments, the AOI is currently celebrating its 148<sup>th</sup> year of continuous service to the residents and civic leaders of our great city. One of the AOI's primary goals is the preservation, maintenance and promotion of both the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans for the District of Columbia. We are on record for opposing many proposed street closures and in support of the reopening of ill-advised street closings. The low profile of the city's skyline is an important element in maintaining the original vision for our city, the Nation's Capital.

The AOI is opposed to any changes in the Height Act. We are concerned that changes to the Height Act will be a slippery slope toward future, more frequent and more radical changes. We believe the NCPC staff has done an excellent job in analyzing the issues, creating graphic animations, hosting community forums, taking both written and oral testimony and presenting their findings in easy-to-understand recommendations. However, we do not support their recommendations to relax even penthouse use regulations.

The AOI is *particularly disappointed* in the recommendations of the District of Columbia's Office of Planning as transmitted to the NCPC by Mayor Vincent Gray. These recommendations are contrary to what we heard at community forums and represent, we believe, an ill-advised attempt to assert District autonomy from the U.S. Congress at the expense of the District's century-old building height restrictions. This is not the time, place or circumstance for this debate. We agree with D.C. Council Chair Phil Mendelson that the Mayor's recommendation transmitted to you is "not supported by the Council or the vast majority of District residents."

